

THE TOP O'
THE COLUMN

By KEITH PRESTON



S0-BBT-189



811.5
P930t

86218

811.5
P930t

86218

Preston, Keith
The Top O' the Column

REC'D		
DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME	

LIBRARY
College of St. Francis
JOLIET, ILL.

1979

University of St. Francis

GEN 811.5 P930t

Preston, Keith,

The top of the column.



3 0301 00086814 7





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-BBT-189

THE TOP O' THE COLUMN

THE TOP O' THE COLUMN

By

KEITH PRESTON

Author of

"TYPES OF PAN," "SPLINTERS,"
"COLUMN POETS"



CHICAGO
PASCAL COVICI • Publisher
1925

LIBRARY
College of St. Francis
JOLIET, ILL.

Copyright 1925

PASCAL COVICI • *Publisher*
CHICAGO

811.5
P930t

To
CHARLES H. DENNIS
*of the Chicago Daily News in grateful acknowel-
edgment of his sympathetic editorship.*

862.15

CONTENTS

	Page
The Top O' the Column	3
The First Christmas	4
He'd Be Surprised	5
The Column in History	6
Nocturne	7
The New Petagogy	8
The Poet Broadcasts	10
The Liberators	11
The Work of a Lifetime	12
Ode to a Dandelion	14
Epitaph to a Pet Parrot	15
The Educational Problem	17
Denatured Noblemen	18
To a Pollywog	19
Apologia	20
The Alienist	22
Elegy in a Suburban Beauty Parlor	23
Words! Idle Words!	24
Troubadours All	25
The Tort Courteous	26
Consider the Radio Announcer	27
Cosmic Radio	28
The Heroine	29
Honorably Discharged	30
Down Where the Vest Begins	32
On the Amount of Eating in the Novels of Edna Ferber	33
Elf Child	34
If	35
The Destiny That Shapes Our Ends	36
Purification by Radio	37
Lapsus Linguae	38
Reflection in An Art Gallery	39
Testimonial	40

CONTENTS—Continued

	Page
The Great Fire at Rome	41
The "Friendly Arctic"	42
Ballade of Woman's Interests	43
That Sinister Something	45
Remember Alma Mater	47
The High Cost of Operations	48
On a Florida Rhetorician	49
Society Russe	50
The Old Man of Ecorse	51
The Misprized Sheik	52
To a Mexican Jumping Bean	54
Personality's Last Refuge	55
When Fat Is Bliss 'Tis Folly to Reduce	56
To a Conservative Critic	57
There's a Reason	58
The Inspirational Orator	59
The Wary Wives of Williamson	60
To the Christmas Tree	62
Longevity	63
Carpe Diem	64
Campus Souvenir	66
The Eternal Feminine	67
The Golfer Looks at the Tree	68
Snow Stuff	69
To a Pansy	70
Sargasso Song	71
Sex Made Simple	72
A Child's Garden of Hygenic Verse	73
Hitch Your Petrol Wagon to a Star	74
Smart Stuff	75
Pop Criticism	76
How They Do It	77
Lines to the Moon	78
Our Village Aesthete	79

CONTENTS—Continued

	Page
Subtitles	80
Coming Events Cast Their Shadows Before . . .	81
The Blessed Jay-Walker	82
Integer Vitae	84
To Leuconoe: Concerning Her Decree	85
The Simple Life	86
Puppy Love	87
Easter Offerings	88
Half-Gods	89
Spring Poem	90
Snapshooting Grandma	91
Where Ignorance Is Bliss	92
Good Old Nature	93
On the Medical Division of Criticism	95
The Devil Goes Bolshevik	96
Problem of the Infrequent Play-Goer	97
What Next?	98
The Complete Executive	99
Declaration of Independence	100
Song	101
Epitaph for a Dial Critic	102
Extracting the Moral	103
Sequela	104
Epitaph: For a Gold Star Pedestrian	105
Prohibition Jabberwock	106
Lines Written on the Eve of a National Election . .	107
Freshwater Classics	108
An Awful Responsibility	109
The Wines of France	110
To Frances Hodgson Burnett	112
Vanity Fair	114
A Modest Modern	116
The Truth at Last	117
To the Editor of "Starbeams"	119

THE TOP O' THE COLUMN

THE TOP O' THE COLUMN

Day after day our daily muse,
Perched in this high position,
Watches the fluctuating news
Edition by edition.
From noon to early afternoon,
Home, tenth, to final makeup,
She sees the news room change its tune
In shakeup after shakeup.
She watches the alleged confirmed
And the confirmed denied,
Whereat what is politely termed
Her mind puffs up with pride.
Our muse seems light to sober men,
Her mind no weighty matter,
But when her mind's made up, why, then,
You bet she's a standpatter!

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Peter was a fisher boy
Helping with the haul;
Pilate was a shavetail
Leading troops in Gaul.
Judas was as innocent
As little child can be;
The wood that made the crucifix
Was still a growing tree;
Unminted still the silver
That made the traitor's pay,
And none had yet commercialized
The spirit of the day.

HE'D BE SURPRISED

St. Valentine, shy celibate,
Would be surprised if he could see
Us sheiks upon his holy date
Giving our sweeties hosiery.
Yea! He would scratch his haloed pate
In wonder how his day
Now starts the little birds to mate,
The little bards to lay!
To find himself the patron saint
Of hosier and confectioner
Blazoned in shameless ink and paint
On shop and Sheba's calendar,
He'd be surprised, and blush, and blink
Though kind and tender hearted,
The shy saint would turn pink, I think,
To see what he has started.

THE COLUMN IN HISTORY

Great emperors in days of old
On columns did their deeds unfold.
To fill his column Trajan hurled
Red ruin round the Roman world.

Still columns mighty deeds record,
But peace has triumphed o'er the sword.
I read a book or feed my cat;
My column tells the world of that.

NOCTURNE

It was the sweetest little lady stick-up;
So saintly good was she
The cops all wondered where the kid could pick
up
Such perfect piety.

She cast her eyes up in a kind of glory,
Most mystical and meek:
“Oh, Gawd!” she prayed (it made a front page
story),
“Don’t let ’em catch my sheik!”

The cops all started in to sniff and hiccup,
The sob sisters to sob,
“Ums is the loveliest little lady stick-up
That ever pulled a job.”

The captain banged his fist upon the table
(The sob sisters all flinched);
“Girlie,” he choked, as well as he was able,
“Your boy friend shan’t be pinched!”

THE NEW PETAGOGY

(The real purpose of the Chicago zoo, says Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick, is to study the psychology of wild animals.)

When Noah started his well-known ark
He never thought of a test or mark;
He issued a coeducational call
And made it an animal free-for-all;
So long as they trooped in two by two
He never asked what the poor fools knew.

And that's the reason, we dare to say,
That makes dumb animals dumb to-day;
Old fogey Noah, with his bum steers,
Set back petagogy ten thousand years;
And made the conditions we'll rectify
In the psychological zoo of Chi.

The animals will enter one by one
As soon as their intelligence tests are done,
Their standings posted on graded lists,
By eminent local psychologists,
And each assigned to his proper cage
By the personnel director we'll engage.

The monk and the elephant think they're smart,
But our pet director will have a heart;
He'll make the petagogues set some store on
The poor old jackass, that worthy moron,
And map out courses they're fit to do
For him and the laughing hyena, too.

The dumbest beastie will have his chance;
His bent to cultivate and enhance.
The beaver will enter our building courses,
The mole to mining will turn his forces;
In dormitories quite up to date
Our bears will do nothing but hibernate.

Even the polecat, that roguish elf,
Shall feel quite free to express himself.
We'll count on the monkey's campus capers
To get us publicity in the papers,
And keep our name in the public eye,
The psychological zoo of Chi!

THE POET BROADCASTS

I shot a poem into the air;
It fell to earth I knew not where;
 When I had quite forgotten,
Yea! after seven nights and days
I got a card from Los Anglaze
 On which was written "Rotten!"

THE LIBERATORS

Among our literary scenes,
Saddest this sight to me,
The graves of little magazines
That died to make verse free.

THE WORK OF A LIFETIME

See H. L. Mencken on "Comstockery"

When I was a lad on the Baltimore Sun
The books that I got to lambaste
Day in and day out in the regular run
Were almost incredibly chaste;
You cannot imagine how horribly pure,
How heinously, hopelessly clean
Was the chronic condition I set out to cure
In the so-called American scene.

It seemed beyond hope—I was only a boy—
The Comstocks were many and strong,
And though I ran wild with a Berserker joy
The battle was bitter and long.
Through thick and through thin I and Elinor
Glyn
Wrote on amid setbacks and checks;
(We're not speaking now but the old gal has
been
A power in the battle for sex).

The tide turned at last, came allies thick and
fast,
Came Dreiser, came Cabell, and Hecht;

Each season more faint is the Puritan taint
In the pishposh I get to inspect.
Came help from abroad, Dr. Freud like a god
From a fearfully modern machine.
And in lifting the bar we owe much to Bernarr
Macfadden for hints on hygiene.

Now glory to me and, in lesser degree,
To others, the sex struggle's won,
The fight I began, to make fiction more free,
As a lad on the Baltimore Sun.

Now lewder each day, in a wonderful way,
Are the truths that we're licensed to tell;
What we whispered of old, I am thankful to say,
To-day we are privileged to yell.

ODE TO A DANDELION

Thou little sun upon our lawn,
Men hold thee doubly dear,
Knowing that when thy day is gone
As moonshine thou'lt appear!

EPITAPH TO A PET PARROT

(After Ovid)

He could not die that showed himself so fit
To rise immortal over envy's tooth;
There's room below for eloquence and wit
Like his, if seers speak sooth.

Deep in Elysium there's a dusky copse
Of fragrant bushes by a bubbling rill;
For parrot food a spectral sunflower drops
Such seeds as fill the bill.

Here now that gifted pet for whom we yearn,
Perched like a prof upon an upper limb,
Teaches the birds that come in flocks to learn
The tongue that died with him.

Dead languages he teaches, that is true.
And yet from him they seem both new and
pat;
Delighted doves sit at his feet and coo,
"Amo, amas, amat."

He makes his "hic, hæc, hoc," so humorous,
A twitter runs around his feathered backers:

In Pluto's realm no other poll earns thus
His educator crackers.

There's room below for eloquence and wit;
The tireless tongue that talked so long and
well,
Finding up here so few for learning fit,
Draws eager crowds in hell!

THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

Philosophers insist the root
Is teach the young idea to shoot;
While pacifists reply we got to
Teach the young idea not to.

DENATURED NOBLEMEN

"One cannot now use the expression 'drunk as a lord' because lords do not get drunk."—Lady Astor.

Look at the days when lords used to get drunk:
Lords had authority, dander, and spunk;
Look at 'em now in these liquorless years:
Lords without liquor are only near-peers!

TO A POLLYWOG

Poor little thing, you are so cute;
Too bad you have to evolve!
Give fundamentalists their way
A pollywog you'd always stay!

APOLOGIA

"Some of the most heinous crimes in history have been committed by college graduates."—William Jennings Bryan.

Yes, I too wear that wicked key;
I was a beardless Ph. B.,
 And later a Phi Bate;
They hung it on me innocent;
I swear I knew not what it meant!
When to the campus I was sent
 To grind and graduate.

Now people hiss: "He went to college!
A malefactor of great knowledge.
 A furtive Ph. B."
Yea! Honest lowbrows raise their eyebrows,
"He hails from that hothead of highbrows,
 A university!"

"He holds that Ph. B. degree!
Another wolf in sheepskin he
 Of murderous erudition;
They say he has at his command
Dead languages, their syntax and
 Advanced decomposition."

Yet, folks, unjustly you are branding
Us even if we lose our standing
Among the Phi Bate set;
Though Phi Bate, beardless, and precocious,
We can't claim even one atrocious
Assassination—yet.

THE ALIENIST

An alienist is not a joke;
He finds you cracked and leaves you broke.

ELEGY IN A SUBURBAN BEAUTY PARLOR

The path of beauty leads but to the wave
Whose so-called "permanence" is transitory.
Only less fleeting than the manly shave
The crimp in what was woman's crowning
glory.

At beauty parlors they go out and in,
The withered crone, the kittenish young cutie,
The while grim Clotho with a toothless grin
Sits at her bobbin, snipping off their beauty.

WORDS! IDLE WORDS!

Every lit'ry movement has a jargon all its own
Which ye little critic sets himself to gleaning;
If you only make the lingo of the lit'ry life your
own
You'll never need to bother with the meaning.

TROUBADOURS ALL

Carl Sandburg gets 'em near and far,
With the guitar, the gay guitar!
Alf Kreymborg cuts his stuff to suit
'The mandolute, the mandolute!
What peddles Vachel Lindsay's dope?
'The calliope, the calliope!

We can not cut our stuff to suit
The gay guitar or mandolute.
Our instrument is quite absurd,
We play upon the word, the word!
We have no parlor trick but one
We harp upon the pun, the pun!

!

82215

[25]

LIBRARY
College of St. Francis
JOUET III

THE TORT COURTEOUS

(Lawyers in the "kissing-doctor" case are divided as to whether a kiss is a tort.)

Some lawyers call a kiss a tort,
Others the opposite report.

A kiss is not a tort, we find—
If you can prove retort in kind.

CONSIDER THE RADIO ANNOUNCER

No living mortal lacks some worth
If you can find just where;
If he's no good at all on earth
Then try him on the air!

COSMIC RADIO

Last night I caught, a little after 7,
The matin crow of China's chanticleers;
At 8 I tuned in on the harps of heaven;
At 9 I tapped the music of the spheres;
At 10 beyond the surge of stellar ocean,
Above the tinkling of celestial lyres,
I heard demoniac yells in wild commotion,
And knew 'twas Satan stoking up his fires.

THE HEROINE

The maid full armed in innocence,
And gay with girlish confidence,
 Requires no chaperon;
Not though she meets those sultry sheiks,
With whom the hot Sahara reeks,
 Unfriended and alone.

Put her in peppy Timbuctoo,
Or in an Eskimo igloo,
 Her life's an open book;
She travels for material;
She's bound to make a serial
 On which the world may look.

HONORABLY DISCHARGED

(Acknowledgments to "Food After Forty," by Mary Swartz
Rose in the Hygeia Magazine.)

I have thought it no great matter

To go up against the platter

And down the hottest stuff the chef could
send;

Table d'hote or a la carte

I was raring for the start

And no one was before me at the end.

No more wicked work was made

Than the knife and fork I played;

I was a very devil in the trenchers;

Let the Germans do their wurst,

I was hungry as at first.

At frogs I was a marvel to the Frenchers.

Wiener schnitzel and pork shank,

I tore through 'em like a tank

And combed the menu card for something
harder;

I put down all he had

Till the cook called "Kamerad!"

And surrendered the poor remnant of his
larder.

But I'm forty now and fatter

For the butter and the batter,

Not so fit as in my famous fighting day;

Who can call me a poltroon

If I sing a softer tune

And lay my trusty knife and fork away?

Let some younger fellow ogle

The fat chickens a la Schlogl

And pit himself against the pinguid pan;

I grow wiser now and thinner

At my vegetable dinner

And my daily dose of hygienic bran.

DOWN WHERE THE VEST BEGINS

As a man grows older and his muscles soften
There's a spot he thinks of every day more often,

Down where the vest begins!

As his lot grows easy and his burdens lighten
There's a spot down yonder where the buttons
tighten

Down where the vest begins!

As there's less of fighting and more of feeding
Comes a sign of fortune, that he can't help
heeding

Down where the vest begins!

For it's there success puts her approbation
On that prosperous growing "corporation".

Down where the vest begins!

ON THE AMOUNT OF EATING IN THE NOVELS
OF EDNA FERBER

For tasty food in toothsome diction,
Order Edna Ferber's gefüllte fiction.

ELF CHILD

(Impressions of a reading by America's greatest woman poet.)

One knows her for a woman of a wise and bitter tongue,

But "Charming child!" the ladies cooed and loved her as she sung

Of a cunning little Sorrow and a clever little Sin
In verse as neat and pointed as a nice new pin.

IF

(Adapted to the new university intelligence tests.)

If you can add 15 to 6 and 20,

Take 5 away, and add 10 more to that,

Divide by 4 and find two minutes plenty—

For that's the time you have to come to bat.

If you can figure out the burning question,

“Cold is to ice as wot-in-'ell's to heat?”

If you can name the organ of digestion,

And tell a rutabaga from a beet—

If you can give the masculine of “Lizzie”

And name a dozen synonyms for pep;

If you can tell what makes the bee so busy,

And just how Walter Dill Scott won his
rep—

If you can write a dozen facts a minute,

And grade as high as 50 when you're done,

Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it;

What's more—you'll be a College Man, my
son!

THE DESTINY THAT SHAPES OUR ENDS

Imperial Cæsar dead and turned to clay
Estopped a hole to keep the wind away;
The great god Ra whose shrine once covered
 acres
Is filler now for cross-word puzzle makers.

PURIFICATION BY RADIO

(The radio craze, thinks the Chicago Evening Post editorially, bids fair to purify our English speech.)

Though programs may be mostly "pop,"
Some manna sure is bound to drop
 From profs and Ph. D's;
Amid the jazzy blare and hum
Into each life some lore will come
 Upon the evening breeze.

Kiddies will mind their p's and q's,
Molding their speech on book reviews
 By leading criticsasters;
Parents will purge their shalls and wills
In the pure spring of speech that spills
 From pundits or from pastors.

You ask why bores from which one sprints
On platforms or in public prints
 By radio can teach;
It is a mystery profound.
We do not know; we only sound
This modern miracle that's bound
 To purify our speech.

LAPSUS LINGUÆ

(From the Chinese of Hi Binder)

We wanted Li Wing
But we winged Willie Wong,
A sad but excusable
Slip of the tong.

REFLECTION IN AN ART GALLERY

Even the dreariest "work of art,"
Thrice-damned as it may seem,
Was once, in its creator's heart,
A beautiful young dream.

For each man maims the thing he loves
In well-intended toils;
Some butcher it in pen and ink,
In marble some, or oils.

TESTIMONIAL

When you feel that you are slipping,
That your brain clutch is not gripping,
In short, that you no longer concentrate,
That you're losing cerebiration,
And your ratiocination
Is failing at a most alarming rate—

Then, reader, try what we did,
"Brain Tests" is what is needed,
The puzzle book that really stands the gaff.
With "Brain Tests" to keep score on
You can prove yourself a moron—
We did in just a minute and a half.

THE GREAT FIRE AT ROME

(By Radio Returns)

This is Station SPQR calling;

Already the half of Rome burns...

Mr. Nero will sing his most popular thing

While waiting for further returns.

Six Palatine precincts are burning...

Accompanying himself on the fiddle...

The Capitol's lit...we'll sign off for a bit...

Mr. Nero sings hi-diddle-diddle.

THE "FRIENDLY ARCTIC"

The arctic is our friend, we know
Because Stefansson tells us so,
And, what is more, it has a way
Of dropping in here every day;
In fact, of late it seems to me
The arctic is too neighborly.

BALLADE OF WOMAN'S INTERESTS

It struck me at the Woman's Fair,
Whereat all styles and turnstiles meet,
How manifold the mind shown there,
How deft, discerning and discreet,
The new, the notable, the neat
In customs and in costumes show
How woman wants the earth complete—
Man needs but little here below.

The world's her realm—and not to share—
God's footstool is her regal seat;
Man overworks for underwear
And racks his brain to shoe her feet;
To trail her triumph is his treat;
This secret all wise women know
And whisper as they meet and greet,
"Man needs but little here below."

In some few things they did not care
In former ages to compete;
Long labor with short clothes and hair
For mere men were considered mete;
Now woman holds the jobs elite,

Shorter her bobs and suitings grow,
In man's own sphere she has him beat—
Man needs but little here below!

ENVOY

Men, watch the shops on any street.
Success comes where the women go;
Their's is the best to wear and eat,
Man needs but little here below!

THAT SINISTER SOMETHING

"It is difficult to write about because what makes it the book it is is something very subtle, very English, something subconscious if one may use the word."—Miss Fanny Butcher in the Chicago Tribune.

A U. S. A. book one may like at a look

And laud without long hesitation,

So nice and naive without thought to deceive

Is the art of our amiable nation.

A chapter or two is enough to review—

If all is not told on the jacket.

But those English! Dear, dear! Every page
hides a sneer

That takes all your cunning to track it.

It may be a whiz, the book that it is,

But it is so because it's so subtle;

Then too it may not—that's what you must
spot—

Beware of a hasty rebuttal!

Look twice ere you leap, still waters run deep,

Make sure it's not tosh ere you tout it.

It's ticklish to know what opinion to show

And whether to whisper or shout it.

There's a nescio quid (that's a something that's
hid),

You'll pardon my airing my Latin?

In a real English book there's no angle or nook

Or corner you can't smell a rat in.

Mysterious style! They say it's worth while,

But it's not for the simple or skittish,

Subconscious and subtle, defying rebuttal,

Ineffably, utterly British!

REMEMBER ALMA MATER

There was an old woman who lived in a U.
She had so many children she didn't know what
to do;
So she started a drive on her darling alums
And canvassed 'em all for considerable sums.

THE HIGH COST OF OPERATIONS

“The cost of operations?” said the surgeon—

We caught him in a confidential mood—

“If it mounts by steps progressive

To a sum that seems excessive

The fault is in the public attitude.

“With the vogue of operations you’re familiar—

There’s nothing that confers such social tone;

And all ask the most extensive

Complicated and expensive

Operations in the market for their own.

“There’s hardly any call for the appendix,

The best and cheapest job we have in store;

Since appendices got common

It’s impossible to palm one

On the most confiding patient any more.

“How hope to cut the cost of operations

So long as people run in fashion’s ruts?

If they must have fancy slices

Then we’ll charge ’em double prices

Until they learn to take the cheaper cuts.”

ON A FLORID RHETORICIAN

There was a luxuriant orator
Who nobody thought could be torrider,
 But he bought him a lot
 In a tropical spot
And his speeches got Florida and Florida.

SOCIETY RUSSE

("Clothes Scarce in Russia: Organize Semi-nude Clubs."—
Headline.)

There was a young lady in Ussr
Who wished to step out with a fusser,
Her wardrobe was crude,
So she went seminude,
Which caused the smart set to discuss 'er.

THE OLD MAN OF ECORSE

There was an old man of Ecorse,
A reprobate dead to remorse,
With a hut by the river,
A rum boat and flivver,
“Prohibition,” said he, “I indorse!”

THE MISPRIZED SHEIK

"It is better to get the ideal of a Red Grange than of a Rudolph Valentino into the mind of your boy."—George Huff to the Chicago City Club.

Slight, if you will, a "Rudy" for a "Red";
The choice is yours when all is done and said;
But never say the lady-killing sheik
In manly feats is ipso facto weak.

Paris, for all his lovelocks and his lute,
Punctured Achilles through his bull-hide boot,
And left him flopping in the Trojan dust,
That burly he-man, Greece's pride and trust.

Tout, if you will, the homers of Babe Ruth,
But never carp at sheiks, with envy's tooth;
Sheik Casanova (see his truthful tome)
Had no superior at stealing home.

Applaud "Red" Grange or any shifty back,
Granting that sheiks in tactics do not lack;
Don Juan, good men and true could testify,
Took some defense when bent on getting by.

Praise beefy boys who putt or punt or pummel.
But give their dues to Beaucaire and Beau
 Brummel;

Despite their powder, paint, pomade and oils,
Those fops were demons with the sharpened
 foils.

Say what you will, for all his semblance sleek,
You face the tiger when you scratch the sheik;
Who knows what Rudolph was prepared to
 show
Had football claimed his light fantastic toe?

TO A MEXICAN JUMPING BEAN

Ah, little lively harlequin
With such a nimble wit within!
Would that from musing on thy mien
I too may learn to use my bean.

PERSONALITY'S LAST REFUGE

"The charm sought in 'personal' gifts is in silk undergarments."
—Adv.

Now hose have lost their modest charm
Through unabashed publicity
And puritans view with alarm
The menace to pudicity
Isn't it splendid to find out
That still, in times like these,
There's something personal about
One's step-in or chemise?

WHEN FAT IS BLISS 'TIS FOLLY TO REDUCE

"Shah of Persia Loses Good Humor as Weight Drops. Dieting Makes Former Buddha-like Face Like That of Prize Fighter."—Paris Report.

Serene the shah of Persia sate

In Buddha-like obesity,

And said to all the cares of state

"Shoo, fly! Don't bother me!"

Alas, poor shah! lured to grow slim

By exercise and diet "bugs,"

The load he lost from wind and limb

Now on his mind he lugs.

The lean and hungry habit may

Suit pug or candidate,

But, in the name of sheol, say!

Why should a shah shed weight?

TO A CONSERVATIVE CRITIC

Unread in the moderns
You grumble and frown on 'em;
You never were up on 'em,
How can you be down on 'em?

THERE'S A REASON

"What is it about books on etiquette that stirs us to ribaldry?"
—Prof. James Weber Linn.

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be spoofy
Whenever a mentor appears
Who tips off the gauche and the green and the
goofy
On when not to wiggle their ears?

In points of punctilio what's there so silly? Oh,
Why should we snicker and scoff
At volumes that show, if with toffs we would go,
What to do and to don and to doff?

Well, the reason is this, such stuff makes us a
"sis"

So we hiss at the etiquette shelf;
Be a hobbledehoy or a jackass, my boy,
But first of all things be yourself!

THE INSPIRATIONAL ORATOR

Though he said nothing much that mattered
The audience departed flattered;
He told them nothing that they needed
And so his every word they heeded.
His speech was just what they expected,
So no one had to stand corrected;
He served a perfect balanced ration
Of after-luncheon inspiration.

THE WARY WIVES OF WILLIAMSON

(The wife of the late Ora Thomas is said to have urged him to take a small machine gun to town with him, as he was wearing only one gun.)

The day was fair in Herrin,
No cloud was in the sky,
When Ora Thomas started out
And waved his wife good-by.
And she called from the window,
As wives in Herrin will,
“It’s a fine day for a murder
An’ you not dressed to kill!

“I told you wear the iron shirt
I riveted last night!
It doesn’t show the bloody dirt
An’ sheds the bullets right.
An’ take the small machine gun—
It won’t be in your way;
It’s a fine, fine day in Herrin!”
Meaning merry hell to pay!

But Ora he just smiled at her
And waved his gallon hat.

Says he, "I've got my hand grenades
And go-to-meetin' gat.
In such good shootin' weather
I guess this little gun
If I should meet a flock of Klux
Will see me through the fun."

Alas for gallant Ora,
Whose headstone will attest
Then when it comes to husbands' wear
Our wary wives know best.
Men, let this Herrin husband's fate
A lesson be to us,
Caught in a rain of bullets
Without his bunderbuss!

TO THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Your baubles are for childhood,
The gauds and gems you wear;
We woo the simple wildwood
Upon your dusky hair.
An undefiled Persephone
Within this pale of bricks.
You bring the airs of Arcady
Across our urban Styx.

LONGEVITY

Old John D.'s longevity

Teaches us all the thrift of time,
To watch our days with lock and key
And count each sun a shiny dime.
Each day, invested now for health,
Will bring a double dividend;
Time will compound the hoarded wealth
Of days you did not spend.

Old John D., that thrifty soul,

Assured himself a long life when
He banned the fiddlers and the bowl
And took to golf and doctor men;
So never give your daily dole
For love, or revelry, or rime
And you will play the final hole
Triumphant over Father Time.

CARPE DIEM

"The colyum has drifted into decadence. After all, how can one be clever every day?"—Doctor Clifford Smythe in the International Book Review.

The colyum can not live always,
Though colyumists be gay and blithe,
We can't be clever every day,
Nay, nay, says learned Doctor Smythe.

It can't be sunny every day;
Into each life some rain must fall;
One can't be always bright and gay,
So why should one be bright at all?

Our end we can not long delay,
For madly as we frisk and frolic,
We can't be clever every day,
It's mortal to be melancholic.

Our colyums all have feet of clay;
Yea, yea, says earnest Doctor Smythe;
With persiflage we can not stay
The stern old critic with the scythe.

Like grasshoppers so fat at play,
When winter comes we'll come to grief;

It can't be summer every day;
Procrastination is time's thief.

We can't be clever every day;
So let's make hay while shines the pun,
Gather we wheezes while we may,
The frost will soon be on our fun.

CAMPUS SOUVENIR

Oft in our dizzy days colyum conducting
Memory wakes of our college instructing,
Days calm and cool as the life of an oyster
Casting our pearls in an ivy-grown cloister.

Oft in the heat and dust of the composing room
Memory harks back to cloister's enclosing gloom
Where we sat suiting to tender digestions
Tests and translations and quizzes and questions.

Where are the cap and gown that we did lightly
doff?

Who is the peer of a popular Latin prof?
Far from the madding loop cluttery, clattery,
Flappers flit round him with fluttery flattery.

So does Minx Memory mocking your columnist
Tempt him to turn professorial pacifist . . .
Away with you, hussy! in vain do you vamp us!
Up with the colyum and down with the campus!

THE ETERNAL FEMININE

Grandpa called her charmer;
 Father called her vamp;
Junior calls her hot mamma—
 The flip young scamp!

It seems there's evolution
 In the matter of her name,
But whatever men may call her
 She plays the same old game!

THE GOLFER LOOKS AT THE TREE

"Blame Golfers for Assault on Trees."—Headline

There's nothing quite so dumb, methinks,
As any tree upon the links.

A tree that, rooted to the spot,
Stands whether I yell "Fore" or not.

A tree that sprawls its silly boughs
And stops the swiftest drive one sloughs.

A tree that spills its leaves around
And hides lost balls upon the ground.

When Kilmer canonized the tree,
He did not view it from a tee.

The dumb, disastrous log, and bore!
What did the good Lord make it for?

SNOW STUFF

As dry as punk,
The snow dusts down;
Some say it's Nature's
Winter gown.
We'll say that's bunk:
To hide time's trace,
The old girl's powdering
Her face.

TO A PANSY

Oh, little petaled platitude,
Propitious to a pensive mood!
No doubt you have a place to fill,
But give me the daft daffodil!

SARGASSO SONG

We have heard a call, we've an ache and all,
And nothing on land can cure us,
To drift and haul with a deep sea trawl
In the wake of the ship Arcturus,
In the deep demesne of the octopus green
And the red marine cucumber,
In the shadowy scene where the pale prawns
preen
And the sunken pirates slumber.

SEX MADE SIMPLE

First, parents let the children know
Great oaks from little acorns grow:
Then *whisper* to the little folks
That little acorns grow from oaks.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF HYGIENIC VERSE

TOOTH DRILL

You ought to look at us kids
With a big bow-handled brush
Dry clean our little cuspids
To a "shush, shush, shush."

HITCH YOUR PETROL WAGON TO A STAR

“Learn something about the Taj Mahal and the Parthenon before you think of building a garage.”—Miss Marian Gheen, Interior Decorator.

To start with, set your heart upon

A classical garage

With main lines from the Parthenon,

And details from the Taj.

Then get some bids upon your plan . . .

And, after you come to,

Go out and beg some handy man

To see what he can do.

SMART STUFF

"An Authoritative Mart for Correct Costuming."—Circular

Though Mrs. Smarty purchased the common
things she wore

At just an ordinary shop or even at a store,
When Smarty gave a party and desired to make
it smart

He had Mrs. Smarty visit an Authoritative
Mart.

POP CRITICISM

Of books how few
We find just right;
Some are too-too
And some not quite.

How THEY Do IT

The Deep Sea Novelist

A barnacle and binnacle
Are all the same to me,
And yet I hold the pinnacle
For yarns about the sea;
I spin 'em just as breezy
As any old seadog
And do it just as easy
As reeling off a log.

LINES TO THE MOON

"New Theory of Moon; acts as Reflector to Warm Earth."—
Headline.

Looking at you on summer nights
Poets with passion frantic
Have tried according to their lights
To make you out romantic.
We only, wise to your real worth,
Sing how you are and were
The warning pan that Mother Earth
Takes into bed with her.

OUR VILLAGE ÆSTHETE

He tends in a broad porcelain dish
Three little lambent golden fish
As pretty as a man could wish.
Upon an orotund old gong
He beats a solemn evensong
With a diminuendo long.
His chamber holds a little shrine
Where Buddha sits in marble fine
(His buddhoir is a word of mine!)
Sitting amid the mystic gloom
We snuff the heavy incense fume—
O tus in urbe! odor sacer
Out of a little tray of lacquer!
And, lastly, he will pass to me
His teaken sage, old Lao Tsze,
The bigness of a child of 3,
And bid me ponder to content
The look of disillusionment,
Upon this venerable gent;
While I perversely smile to see
That disillusionment can be
Hailed with such artless ecstasy.

SUBTITLES

The movie finger writes
And, having writ,
Waits while slow-witted wights
Catch up to it.

COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE

Alma Rubens Is Free! Gloria Swanson Is Tied!
Such is the news of to-day; clip it and put it
aside.

Set up to-morrow's display! Sure as the sunrise
you'll see:

Alma Rubens Is Tied! Gloria Swanson Is Free!

THE BLESSED JAY-WALKER

The upright man and pure of heart
Requires no traffic cop,
No silly signals saying "Start!"
Nor others saying "Stop!"

Whether he brave the busy boul.
Or breast the yellow sea
At State and Madison's mad pool,
Unscathed that man will be.

For we ourself with absent air,
Intent upon a jingle,
Went, looking neither here nor there,
Where murderous motors mingle.

Heedless of whistle, claxon, whoop,
Thinking of that and this,
We jogged jay-walking through the loop
And crossed it hit or miss.

Where autos thicker than contribs
Plied their destructive arts,

We sauntered sound in limbs and ribs
And other useful parts.

Put us where whopping busses roll
Or whippet taxis sprint it—
A little column catch we'll troll
And likely live to print it.

INTEGER VITÆ .

The man who leads a single life
Is safe 'most anywhere;
In Greenwich or Bohemia
No armor need he wear.

But I'd not bet a bum sesterce
On his life did I know he,
While singing songs to Lalage
Was paying bills for Chloe.

TO LEUCONOE: CONCERNING HER DECREE

Seek not to know the cause, the day
That's doomed to cut thy nuptial tie;
The end of wedlock who can say,
The way inventions multiply.

What though he neither flirts nor drinks,
How can a lady know
He will not leave her for the links
Or toy with radio?

Whether he'll bring down fate's decree
By golf or telephony
Pluck the day's bliss, Leuconoe!
Then grab the alimony!

THE SIMPLE LIFE

Horace, Odes 1.38

Persicos odi puer apparatus

I do not share the common craze
For food with jazzy singers;
Boy, tell me not of cabarets
Where the late loophound lingers.

A glass of home brew cool and clear
Wets down my home-cooked victuals;
So long as I can have my beer
I'll gladly miss the skittles.

PUPPY LOVE

Catullus to Lesbia

Let us live and love to-day!
Time and fate are fickle,
And for what sour elders say,
Here's a battered nickel!

Here's a shiny dime for age
That counts the cost of kisses,
And would spite with jealous rage
What perforce it misses.

Gossip is a surly dog
That has seen its day.
Lesbia, let's "Set Rome Agog"
As the papers say.

EASTER OFFERINGS

Horace, Odes 3.23.1-2

Caelo supinas si tuleris manus nascente luna, mustica Phidyle

What though your wardrobe fund be low,
Poor little flapper Phidyle,
Still to the Easter service go
Clad thriftily but tidily!

Wear, if you will, a home trimmed hat,
So you serve this year's style,
And the great gods of vogue to that
Will grant a gracious smile.

Go in a self-made garment drest
With piety and passion—
Your Easter offering will be blest
By the high gods of fashion.

HALF-GODS

(After Tibullus)

I worship by some old log in the fields
Or crossroads stone or altar built of sods,
And whatsoever good my garden yields
The tithes I offer to our rural gods.

Take, golden Ceres, take this treasure trove,
A crown of yellow ears to deck thy shrine;
Stand, red Priapus, in yon apple grove!
And bar the bandit birds from thine and mine.

Ye tutelary Lares of a farm
Once rich, now poor, in bygone seasons blest
With lavish gifts, defend my fields from harm!
Your share, one ewe lamb—little, but my best.

At crossways stone, or log, or shrine of sods
I worship, faithful, whom the cities mock
Far and forgotten, but my father's gods!
The little half-gods of the farming bloc.

SPRING POME

That spring has come each sign agrees;
The rivers flow in rising volumes,
The sap is rising in the trees,
The "saps" are riming in the colyums.
The buds now bust their little jackets;
The bards distend the postman's packets.

SNAPSHOOTING GRANDMA

Her neck is low and her skirts are high:
She looks the camera in the eye
And chuckles: "When youth can be bought so
cheap,
"Might as well be shot for a lamb as a sheep."

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS

"If a well-bred person understood what jazz said he'd run from the room."—A. G. Gulbransen, piano manufacturer.

For our youth, be it said,
In the jazziest scenes
They're so very well bred
They don't know what it means.

When the saxophones leer,
And the drums go "boom boom!"
If they knew what they hear,
They would run from the room.

They would shudder and scream,
Our flappers and sheiks,
If they ever should dream
What the saxophone speaks.

But they don't understand,
They're so very well bred;
So on with the band!
It is over each head.

Let the saxophones sigh
And the drums go "boom boom!"
It is passing them by
Or they'd run from the room!

GOOD OLD NATURE!

"Nature was in fine fettle when she fashioned the wonder region of southern Utah."—Travel circular.

When Nature had finished Niagara falls
She brushed the mud from her overalls
And smole a sort of a satisfied smile
And said, "I guess that'll do for a while."

When Nature had molded Irvin Cobb
She gave the once-over to her job
And said, "The exterior's not so pretty,
But the inside plan is uncommon witty."

The day that Nature laid Kansas out
She looked at her work with unwonted doubt.
Said she, "There's something the matter there
That William Allen White will know how to
repair."

When Nature had finished Nebraska's glory,
Says she, "I bungled his upper story;
Another time I would take more pains,
But with such a tongue he won't miss brains."

When Nature was through with the Golden
Gate

She said, "If you ask me, I think it's great,
But I'm not so dumb as to hope it'll please
Those particular folks in Los Angeles."

ON THE MEDICAL INVASION OF CRITICISM

The Doctor Looks at Literature. By Joseph Collins. Doran.

The doctor looked at literature,
And literature looked at the doc.
Upon my word, one can't be sure
Which got the bigger shock.

THE DEVIL GOES BOLSHIEV

"Chaliapin's devil is the most ungentlemanly performance of the part I ever beheld."—Ashton Stevens.

The devil of the good old days,
Though wild as we could wish,
Was debonair in all his ways
And wise to soup and fish.
His horns were not obtrusive,
And though red was his cravat,
No dandy more exclusive
In the choice of stick or spat.

That devil of the fine old school
Ah, where is he to-day?
He's driven out by Russ misrule
And clowns of common clay.
The devil's culture now is low;
He dresses like a sheik;
Where is a gentleman to go
When hell's gone bolshevik?

PROBLEM OF THE INFREQUENT PLAY-GOER

Mine eyes have seen what drama critics boast
The pinnacle of all the season's plays.
And now I wonder what the critics roast
One-half so rotten as the stuff they praise.

WHAT NEXT?

"What will be tomorrow's bugaboo?"—H. L. Mencken in the Sunday Tribune.

When "Rotary" has lost its curse
And eke "Kiwanis" fails to frighten,
What cuss-word, withering and terse,
Ye critic's labors then can lighten?

When "Babbitt" has begun to wear,
What time "Herr Prof." seems ineffectual,
Then what anathema will scare
Ye tremulous young intellectual?

When "Comstock" does not knock 'em cold,
Will Mencken lose his pep and mustard?
Wanted, new bugaboos for old!
Ye comic critic craves new custard.

THE COMPLETE EXECUTIVE

"Office furnishings reflect the occupant."—Furniture Ad.

Behold the general manager!

He has a desk of character

Authentically flat;

Look at its simple lines of walnut

You know at once the owner's all but

The whole cheese, if not that.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

I am an independent chap;
I see all the shows that the critics rap;
I read all the books the reviewers flay,
And honor uncle on Auntie's Day.

I scoff at all colyumist decrees;
I doff my heavies whenever I please;
I don my felt at the strawhat call,
And buy my coal supply in the fall.

As for Christmas shopping I wait and wait
Till the very latest possible date.
It costs me a bunch of coin, I guess,
But my individuality I express.

SONG

(With profound salaams to Kipling)

Put me somewhere east of sewage

Where a man can fill 'is skin

With some sparklin' drinkin' water

That there ain't no chlorine in.

EPITAPH FOR A DIAL CRITIC

His German and his Dutch
Did not amount to much;
His French was hardly more than parley-voo;
Yet he'd conjure us and dare us
To read Hauptmann and Couperus,
Huysmans, Schnitzler and the Paris Figaroo.

His Latin and his Greek,
Said his intimates, were weak,
Yet he cited classic authors by the score;
And his polylingual patter
Showed the power of mind on smatter-
Ings as nothing that had ever been before.

He died in awful pain,
Polyglot upon the brain,
Said the doctors who conducted the post mortem,
With appalling complications
From the plagues of all the nations—
You would only be perplexed should I report
'em.

EXTRACTING THE MORAL

Those gory cases, we contend,
With which our press is filled
Most plainly show how in the end
The lady killer's killed.

Ponder a little, if you please,
On this or that demise,
And see how often casualties
Result from casual ties.

SEQUELA

The fog (see Sandburg) like a cat
 Crept silent over all;
The fog horn (credit us with that!)
 Was like a caterwaul.

EPITAPH: FOR A GOLD STAR PEDESTRIAN

("Hit at the Busiest Corner."—The Daily News.)

Writ here for all who ride or run

No common death nor weak;

He died at State and Madison

With peril at its peak.

No slacker in some safe suburb

But in the thick of it,

Squarely he crossed the stricken curb

And squarely was he hit.

PROHIBITION JABBERWOCK

'Twas bootleg and the slithy sleuths
Did grab and graft upon the pave
All woody was the alcohol
And the good stuff outgave.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE EVE OF A NATIONAL
ELECTION

Whither the trend has been trending,
Which way the tide was to turn,
Whom was the undertow towing,
Friends, we shall presently learn.

All things at last have an ending,
Soon the landslide will have slid,
Whither the silent vote's going
Cannot much longer be hid.

Soon they will shut off the spouters,
Can all the old stuff again;
The ins will be in till the outers
Can-open another campaign.

FRESHWATER CLASSICS

L'ALLEGRO

(Being the improved version lately revised and made safe for undergrads, graduate students, instructors and assistant professors without outside resources.)

Ivied cloisters please us then
And the hum of learned men
Where throngs of Pigskin Chasers bold
In stadiums high triumphs hold
With store of Coeds, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of brain or brawn, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear—
That is, to full professors, deans,
And men of independent means,
While pale instructors in their cells,
Deaf to the lure of wedding bells,
Each wisely husbanding his stipend
Lead long researches to a ripe end.

AN AWFUL RESPONSIBILITY

I am the captain of my soul;
I rule it with stern joy;
And yet I think I had more fun
When I was cabin boy.

THE WINES OF FRANCE

The Wines of France. By H. Warner Allen. Brentano's.

The wines of France! The wines of France!

That vivid Villon sipped and sung,
That gave the lure to lady's glance
And loosened royal lover's tongue!
Eternal summer warms them yet.
Alas, for us their sun is set.

The Burgundy and Bordeaux wine

That made Moliere and Voltaire gay,
Across our seagirt Volstead line
"They shall not pass!" stern Solons say.
What wonder Pegasus is sick?
The winged horse has lost his kick!

The wines of France! The wines of France!

The wines of Marne, Moselle and Seine,
The sacred catacombs of Reims,
The storied hillsides of Champagne!
Lafite. Cote d'Or, Chateau Yquem . . .
Torment me not with talk of them!

Fill high the bowl with coffee weak

We must not think of themes like these!

'Twas wine gave Cyrano his beak . . .

Boy, bring me an egg chocolate, please!

Wine gave Rabelais his ruffian wit:

Boy, bring me a banana split!

TO FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

Memor actæ non alio rege puertiæ

When we were little boys and girls
Yours was the too persuasive pen
That set the crown of golden curls
On Alcott's sturdy little men.

The golden curls, the velvet pants,
The silken sash with pride displayed
By mothers sold on your romance—
Ah, God! The price we fellows paid!

Many the manly heart that broke,
Many the boyish life embittered!
The taunting words the tough guys spoke,
The teasing way the girlies tittered.

That crown of curls than thorns more sharp—
Alas, you knew not what you wrote!
We do not call it back to carp;
Long since it ceased to get our goat.

Of story ladies first and best,
In heaven now you talk to crowds

Of cherubim forever blest
Squatting on little golden clouds.

Of Sara Crewe and Fauntleroy
You tell them with that tireless tongue;
They listen with seraphic joy,
The little good boys that died young.

What of the Fauntleroy's that fell?
May they not mar your placid joys!
The Cedrics that went straight to hell
To prove they were not mamma's boys!

VANITY FAIR

Selected Poems. By Austin Dobson. Oxford University Press.

Of foibles now a fable, here,
I fancy, you will find the best,
The frails and frills of yesteryear
In many a fragile song and jest.

A belle marquise, a Roman minx,
A shepherdess Theocritean,
Their powdered snows and painted pinks
Preserved in many a pretty pæan.

In the quaint styles of yesterday
The dainty manikins parade
And pose and pirouette and sway
And shrink and fall and fade.

No patterns from poetic looms
Trimmer than Dobson's triolets;
True purple were his borrowed plumes;
His villanelles like violets.

Suited as nicely to the heart
His songs as head alone can see;

His patterns quite as close to art
As artifice can be.

And yet, all dated and gone by;
Lightly he plucked the flying hours
That now within his pages lie
As dry and dusty as pressed flowers.

A MODEST MODERN

A modest man is Barrett Bone,
He never advertises;
He sits alone at the microphone
And just soliloquizes.

THE TRUTH AT LAST

(See "Brigham Young" by H. C. Werner)

The prophet's wives lived in Bee Hives
Upon their best behavior;
They looked on Brigham as their lord
And spiritual savior;
They worked to earn their bed and board;
Their life was not so funny
As claimed by Twain and Artemus Ward,
Men puerile and punny.

No common bed for them was spread,
As humorists have stated;
Each had a pillow for her head,
Her couch was segregated.
The younger Youngs did not raise Ned;
However Brigham twinned,
This to his credit can be said,
His kids were disciplined.

He kept contentment in the house,
With here a hat and there a shawl;
His wives believed that half a spouse
Was better than no spouse at all;

He did not revel nor carouse,
Nor use divorce or bigamy,
But lived as smug as a church mouse,
A pillar of polygamy!

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COLUMN CALLED
"STARBEAMS" IN THE SASKATOON
(SASKATCHEWAN) DAILY STAR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star!
How I wonder who you are!
When the colyum that you edit
Prints our wheezes without credit,
Prints our paragraphs verbatim,
Surreptitious and privatim.

Twinkle, little Starbeams, twinkle
Little do your readers inkle
That your brightest cacchinations
Are reflected scintillations
From a guy that airs his views
Here within The Daily News.

Twinkle, little Starbeams, twinkle
We would never put a crinkle
In your style or cramp your smiles;
You are welcome to our files.
Yea! We hope no wit will match you
And Saskatchewan won't catch you!

Bliss enough for us to know
Just how far our splendors go!
Others shine for local duners;
We are shed on Saskatooners.
Yea! Our rays reflect upon
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan!



26

425

26

University of St. Francis

GEN 811.5 P930t

Preston, Keith,

The top of the column.



3 0301 00086814 7